A fight against moral inhibitions was an important aspect of Lenin's political propaganda. People engaged in revolutionary work often profess a double scale of moral values—one for people in general, another for revolutionaries. The advocates of such a double code of morality justify it by contending that the goal of a revolution is always to replace the scale of values imposed on the people by the oppressors with another scale of values that accords with freedom, justice, and equality. But Lenin's idea was that revolution needs no justification—least of all a moral justification—and is itself the highest criterion of right and wrong. Whatever is expedient for the revolution—according to Lenin, for the Bolshevist party—is right; everything that fails to serve it is valueless or evil. This philosophy of absolute amoralism in politics had a destructive effect on the young workers whom Lenin converted into "professional" officials of the organization.

Most of the persons in Lenin's immediate circle were men of high political and personal integrity. But he believed that a revolutionary party also needs obedient scoundrels, such as Anton for minor errands or Zinoviev for more responsible dirty jobs. They could be drunks, wastrels, gigolos, embezzlers of party funds, notorious liars, or cowards. Lenin kept them in the organization as his personal palace guard. "Ours is a big business," he explained. "We can use all kinds of trash."

His moral indulgence was sometimes grotesque. Anton, for example, was one of his protégés despite the conspicuous blots on his escutcheon. Once the party organization sent him from Russia to Geneva with funds for the local Bolshevist group. He arrived without money but with a cloak-and-dagger story about his narrow escape from the police. Later it was proved that he had squandered the party's money in a drunken spree in a brothel. Lenin came to his defense. "Perhaps he went there to escape spies," he suggested. "And not much money was involved."

I do not know whether Lenin even then was dreaming of personal power. My impression is, rather, that he had some anarchistic leanings and thought of a society without a centralized government. Perhaps Bakunin, with his vision of a revolutionary hurricane that creates new life by destroying the old world, was closer to Lenin than was Marx.

No one who came into personal contact with Lenin could remain indifferent toward him. Some loved him, others hated him; some fell completely under his influence, others followed him to a certain point and later became his implacable enemies.

My attitude toward him was somewhat different from that of the others. Because of my skepticism concerning Marxism, I was not